

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE: THREE NEIGHBORHOODS AND THREE UNIQUE CHALLENGES



2010

Part of the Canton Neighborhood Project

Planning for the Future: Three Neighborhoods and Three Unique Challenges

INTRODUCTION

Canton is a city of enormous opportunity and far too few resources. It is critical that elected officials, city staff, and civic leaders pay attention to the changing dynamics, which will shape perceptions of neighborhoods and the city as a whole. Three examples of this challenge are discussed here to demonstrate the sort of advance planning that is important for Canton to manage its transition into a smaller, but thriving community.

The **Fairgrounds and Clarendon** neighborhoods were chosen as one example because so many people see them as relatively strong and stable communities, but there are early signs of disinvestment. Because these neighborhoods are such an important resource for the city in terms of the number of properties, the visibility of the housing, and the access to key destinations, they cannot be allowed to weaken. Therefore, a modified workplan is included to show how early interventions could protect a key asset.

In just the last few months, **Old Southwest**, also known to many as the Wells School area, has become increasingly important. With the recent opening of the new Federal Center, more people are passing through this small community just south and west of downtown. While not much will likely change over the short term, the reality is that a large public housing tower, public open space, and the massive abandoned Wells School are all opportunity sites that will likely encourage new development. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to the existing housing so that any investments made today will reinforce future investments.

The **Logan Wood** neighborhood isn't a name anyone should recall because it doesn't really exist as a defined neighborhood, but it is a central player in protecting some of the finest housing in the city. The neighborhood is a collection of houses north of 12th Street NW and south of 15th Street NW. It straddles between Walnut and Cleveland Avenue. It is the first stable, conventional neighborhood north of downtown in what can be called Canton's Emerald Wedge, which includes hundreds of outstanding houses and the Ridgewood neighborhood, one of Canton's finest assets. It is important that workplans be considered now to mitigate any disinvestment moving north from 12th Street NW.

Although all three places could hardly be more different, they present similar challenges to the city government and civic leaders. Because they aren't seen as an immediate problem or opportunity, they could easily be overlooked when planning for the future. However, with only a few limited actions today, they can be much more valuable resources for tomorrow.

FAIRGROUNDS AND CLARENDON NEIGHBORHOODS

NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARIES

North	East	South	West
13 th Street NW	I-77	Tuscarawas Street West	Roslyn Avenue NW

WORKPLAN

When crime statistics suddenly jump, redeploying police resources makes sense. When traffic accidents increase significantly at a key corner, the city engineer's office designs new traffic patterns. When an elementary school repeatedly underperforms, the school system and the funding community institute innovative programs and add resources. These are all examples of good leadership in managing community issues. However, they also reflect the usual approach of reacting to identified challenges; a problem is defined and then a response is put in place. But this isn't a complete picture of effective leadership. Indeed, the greatest challenge for local leadership is taking the risk of investing when there isn't an obvious immediate problem to solve.



Many neighborhoods in Canton fit that conundrum. They appear to be thriving and, therefore, aren't demanding additional investments beyond good city services and attention to particular small problems. Their stable occupancy, higher levels of homeownership, good standards of property maintenance, a reputation for safety, and patterns of residents acting as responsible neighbors, usually define these communities. With these virtues, it's easy to overlook emerging problems and instead pay attention to communities with much larger dilemmas. The cost of this reactive approach is that a full disinvestment cycle can often be in place before resources can be deployed.



To illustrate the issue, this workplan was developed to include two adjoining Westside communities, the Fairgrounds and Clarendon neighborhoods. Fairgrounds is largely defined as those blocks south and east of the Stark County Fairgrounds. With Tuscarawas Street West on the south and 13th Street NW on the north, the Clarendon neighborhood includes the corridor defined by Broad and Clarendon Avenues and the blocks east of Clarendon Avenue all the way to I-77. Within these general boundaries, a half-dozen smaller neighborhoods can be identified. Separately or together, these are stable, attractive

communities with new schools, substantial nearby employment (especially Aultman Hospital), good quality commercial services, and an outstanding housing stock. Under almost any definition, these are great places to call home.

Much of the housing stock was built in the first burst of construction just before World War I, but the range of periods of construction is much broader than in many other places. In fact, housing was added in every decade, even into the 1960's. With this spread in age of structures, there is also a greater than usual range of features in the houses, many of which are suburban-like in design. In addition to this variety, the single-family houses are, on average, well over 1300 square feet, which makes these homes among the larger houses in Canton's older neighborhoods.

There are other clear patterns that describe the areas. Typically, whole blocks were built at the same time, so there is more continuity in those areas. Other parts were built with two-family houses predominating and today, fully 10% of all houses are duplexes. Some rental units are joined by converted multi-family houses (usually with three or four units) and by a few apartment buildings. These structures line a grid of streets that have lost few houses over the years. Abandonment is not an issue and only a few houses are classified as vacant.



Although Clarendon Elementary School and the Fairgrounds do offer some open space, there aren't any major parks directly in the neighborhoods, although Westbrook Park is on the northern edge. Likewise, while there are a number of small businesses both in the neighborhoods and surrounding, these businesses take up little of the built space. Unlike so many other places in Canton, there are no remnants of large manufacturing sites. With such continuity, these neighborhoods should be understood for what they are: communities of houses, most of which reflect long-term stability and pride of ownership.

Any workplan for these neighborhoods must recognize that stability and pride are defining elements of the communities and any good analysis needs to determine if these qualities are at-risk. To start this process, a snapshot of the current profile of the neighborhoods was completed and the numbers tended to reinforce the common perceptions of stability.

The neighborhoods total 1200 single-family and multi-family houses and include a dozen apartment houses and four-dozen commercial buildings. There are just four lots listed as vacant in the whole neighborhood. The integrity of the blocks remains solid, although recently there have been some houses sitting on the market for many months and numerous properties are selling in foreclosure or short sales. Even those houses are generally kept in good repair and sales have been active compared with much of the city. (A further discussion of the sales activity will play an important role later in this discussion.)



Based on the most relevant data and on on-site observations, any comprehensive overview of the neighborhoods shows a community that is valued as a good place to live. But beyond the broad summary there are important nuances that are critical to planning. The following will show some key questions. How are day-to-day decisions being made about upkeep, repairs, and improvements? What is happening in the sales market? Are new homebuyers choosing to move in and are current owners choosing to upgrade? How consistent and predictable are the behaviors of owners and investors? Are the agreed-upon quality standards of investment and maintenance prevailing or are new standards dictating the future?

Answers to these questions are particularly important in neighborhoods that are stable, but potentially at risk of change. This importance can be demonstrated through examining a concept called the Prisoner's Dilemma, which is one of the most effective tools in solving crime both on television and in reality.



Essentially, the argument is as follows. When three bank robbers are arrested and interrogated, the “bad guys” suspect that the police don’t have enough proof. Individually, each prisoner is told that if he admits to the crime and implicates the others, his sentence will be more lenient. Each bad guy has to trust the other bad guys not to confess. If no one confesses, they all might go free, but if only one confesses, then the others all have to pay the full price.

Property owners face this same dilemma across Canton. Each owner asks, “Should I invest now or wait and see if my neighbors do first? Can I predict that if I invest others will also improve their properties?” Of course, each property owner reaches his or her unique decision, but we know from experience in older neighborhoods that many of us will delay investing and some will stop altogether. This means that we aren’t confident of the behavior of the other owners, and as a result there is unwillingness to invest. This inaction usually lowers property values, which further convinces people that investing doesn’t make good sense, which, of course, leads to lower property values and less investment. Simply said, the lack of predictability – the Prisoner’s Dilemma – has led to an outcome no one wants to see because everyone loses.

Today many homeowners and investors in Clarendon and Fairgrounds are contending with the challenges of the Prisoner’s Dilemma and the subtle signs of disinvestment are beginning to show. Some roofs need to be replaced but are only being patched. Paint jobs are being delayed, porches need repaired and landscaping needs replaced. These are signs that owners are considering whether it makes sense to invest. Of course, some owners simply can’t afford any improvements and others are too old or disabled, but the emerging patterns go beyond those reasons. At the core, there is clearly a decline in



confidence.

Fortunately the cycle is in a very early stage and there are many parts of the neighborhoods that show incredible stability and pride. In those areas, owners are so “house proud” that lawns are always mowed and leaves are promptly made into mulch. Upgrade replacement windows and architectural shingles are common. Porches are freshly painted and many have new railings and baskets of flowers. Neighbors clearly love both their homes and neighborhoods and plan to stay.



In these circumstances, other owners look at their porches, yards, and roofs, and decide that it is time to invest. Part of this is driven by sound economics, but much of this reflects people’s desire to be responsible and held in high regard. No one wants the shabbiest house on the block, so old-fashioned pride leads to a fresh paint job in contemporary colors or new energy efficient windows. In a good neighborhood with predictable investment happening, all of the neighbors can be confident about investing and can take pride in being a good neighbor.

This desire to be house-proud and to “keep up with the Jones family” is at the base of many recovering older neighborhoods. This is the antidote to the Prisoner’s Dilemma, and in this case everyone wins. Not only is the community more desirable, it is also more valuable. Houses sell more quickly and at higher prices. The tax base remains stable and city services can be fully funded. The higher housing values are reinforced and people are encouraged to invest more, which leads to more predictability about investing.



This is just plain common sense, but just because something makes sense doesn’t mean we always do it. Often we have to be convinced to take the first step even when we know it is logical. In the case of older neighborhoods like Clarendon and Fairgrounds, the aging of the population, the sluggish market for better quality houses, the increasing levels of investor ownership, and the high costs of property improvement in a weak economy come together to undermine confidence.

Examine some aspects of confidence. First, consider the concerns about good maintenance of properties. This is a widely shared goal, but we know that there

are reasons why good upkeep doesn’t happen. Some homeowners are too old or too physically limited to handle all of the challenges of ownership. Some households are facing job loss or divorce and others are just new to ownership and don’t have the experience or the tools to do a good job.

Landlords aren't all the same either. Many landlords do an excellent job of owning and renting property at standards that support the neighborhoods. Other landlords are financially strapped and can't take on large repairs. Some lack the skills or foresight to even make critical minor repairs. Some lack experience in selecting stable tenants and some landlords are actually "landlord-by-accident" having inherited a property and not being able to sell it.

Regardless of the reasons, property owners aren't always able to easily and effectively maintain and improve properties. The impact of these failures fall on all the nearby owners, so in many cities concerted responses to the problems have been developed. There are many examples of such actions and not one is perfect, but it is important to remember that the reason for expecting the repair and improvement of other properties is that there is a benefit to everyone. Greater confidence leads to better communities with higher housing prices and lower tax rates.



Of course, good repair is only part of what makes people more confident. It has been said that people buy a house and a neighborhood, too. Thoughtful buyers look at the surroundings and consider who lives there. Are the residents responsible? Do trashcans go out on the right days and get taken in promptly? Is noise kept to a minimum? Are sidewalks shoveled soon after the snow has fallen? Are the neighbors neighborly? Are porch lights turned on every evening? Does anyone pay extra attention to an elderly resident? Is there a reputation where residents watch out for each other? Good neighborhoods have good neighbors. That doesn't mean that all neighbors are friends; it means that there is respect and consideration.

People have confidence when they know that good investments and good upkeep are the standard and when they know that their neighbors are being good fellow citizens about the challenges of sharing urban space. This confidence is critical for any community to be stable and thrive. This dynamic is often called a healthy neighborhood, which is defined as a place where it makes sense to invest your time, effort, and money in your home, and where neighbors are willing and able to manage the everyday issues in the neighborhood. In sum, as residents, we want to live in places where it makes economic sense and where we are comfortable.



It is when we use the filter of "confidence" that we see the potential for problems in Fairgrounds and Clarendon. One concrete measure of this is the vitality of the real estate market. Is the real estate market functioning as if the owners and buyers are confident in the housing values? The answer is not clear and could potentially be of concern. In a recent six month period, 30 single-family houses sold in a range from \$10,000 to \$80,000 and nine more sales are pending with prices roughly the same.

With only a few exceptions, most sold at or near the original asking price, which is generally a good sign. The greatest price reductions were usually short sales,

auctions, or bank-owned properties. However, a key question is how the prices clustered. Nine houses sold

for over \$40,000, but eleven sold for \$20,000 to \$27,000 and ten sold for under \$20,000. Those lower price sales are usually indications of investor purchases, since these are commonly cash purchases with few mortgages available at that price level.

If we look at the pending sales, we see that four are bank-owned or HUD sales and are expected to sell at distressed price levels. Four others were listed at \$66,000 to \$90,000 before going under contract. Again we are seeing a bifurcated sales market with certain houses and specific areas selling for solid homeowner prices and other properties selling only to investors.

This pattern repeats if we look at the current listings. There are 44 single-family properties on the market and seven of those are distressed sales. Three of the houses are listed below \$20,000 and three more are below \$30,000. There are 12 listed between \$30,000 and \$50,000 and 13 between \$50,000 and \$60,000. There are an additional 13 above \$60,000. The overwhelming majority of properties are selling at prices to attract the home buying market, but if the past patterns are any indication, the most likely sales will be below \$20,000. Many of the remaining properties will be withdrawn or the listings will expire, as has already happened for thirty properties during the six-month study period.

This undermines confidence in the real estate market for homeowner quality houses. These houses are selling very slowly throughout the Canton real estate market, but the impact is more significant here because the lower quality units are quickly selling to investors. This means the market isn't just flat; rather, the market is shifting in character. Over the next few months and years the national economy will surely improve, but the question is whether these neighborhoods will also recover or will increasingly become rental properties co-existing with aging quality homeowner units that aren't readily marketable.

This potential reality is at the core of the challenge of any workplan for these neighborhoods. It would be easy to suggest moving directly to a community outreach process that engaged neighbors in an asset-building approach, which emphasized curb appeal and marketing projects. In this case, the questions are too complex to attempt that sort of workplan. Instead, it is strongly recommended that a workplan gathers the baseline information and proposes the benchmarks necessary for a major intervention. This is to shore up the real estate market and to encourage more homeowner and landlord investments in the houses. To oversee this process, it is recommended that a Neighborhood Investment Committee be established with membership consisting of residents, real estate professionals, individuals with research or academic backgrounds, and city staff.

NEIGHBORHOOD INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

Understanding these communities requires good data, thoughtful research, and a consistent analysis. The Investment Committee should undertake this task as soon as possible. The primary research work should be completed in less than four months and can be accomplished even faster if students are also included in the work.

The central charge for the Committee is to more fully understand what is happening today in terms of investment in the neighborhoods including public dollars, house sales, and property improvements. After mapping and summarizing current patterns of property ownership, the investigative work includes:

1. Mapping all sales by price ranges,
2. Tracking properties that do not sell,
3. Identifying blocks with high levels of investor ownership,
4. Identifying areas with declining homeownership,
5. Listing current and recent capital investments in homes, and
6. Clarifying functional neighborhood boundaries for the distinct areas in the larger study area.

This last point is especially important because this workplan is addressing a number of areas that are unique. These are based on the style of construction, patterns of through traffic, density of the blocks, age of the houses, and other factors that segment the overall community into distinct areas.

Once the information is gathered, the Committee needs to analyze the data. Examples of typical questions are:

- ✓ Where are the strongest areas? Are homeowner purchases still taking place at those sites and are current owners still upgrading their homes? Or are properties not selling and are improvements beginning to decline?
- ✓ What is the real estate impact of concentrations of duplexes and other rental structures? Are separate markets appearing due to high traffic counts or nearby commercial activity?
- ✓ Where do the different styles of houses cluster and how are these patterns encouraging or discouraging more homeownership? What is the impact of nearby suburban housing sales?

When these sorts of questions are answered, the Committee should investigate possible actions that can support more stable ownership and address some of the disadvantages facing parts of the neighborhoods. The Committee should propose appropriate actions by city government, the civic community of Canton, and the residents. Examples of such actions are:

- ✓ Determining if a concentrated exterior code compliance program could stabilize one or more parts of the community and identifying public actions such as sidewalk repair and traffic management, that could make the neighborhood feel safer and better maintained
- ✓ Identifying the availability of home purchase and home repair lending for the various parts of the neighborhood and suggesting loan programs sponsored by the city, the philanthropic groups, and

lenders with the intent of making certain areas more competitive for homebuyers and more attractive for property improvement by current owners

- ✓ Proposing activities by residents that could enhance the image and desirability of the community through self-help block projects, neighborhood naming and identity efforts, curb appeal events, celebrations, etc.
- ✓ Encouraging local businesses, institutions, and funders to support both resident-based activities and resident leadership training

NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVES COMMITTEE

Once the work of the Investment Committee is well underway, it will be critical to form the Neighborhood Initiatives Committee. No doubt the Investment Committee will discover serious emerging issues for the neighborhoods and it is important that a response is immediately forthcoming. If this does not happen, the research work could actually weaken the neighborhoods by further undermining confidence. Therefore, a series of actions must be immediately put in place to show that the community can respond quickly and effectively.

While the Initiatives Committee should be heavily weighted toward residents, it is desirable that real estate and marketing professionals participate. It is also recommended that representatives from the foundation community, city government, and local businesses be included as well. This must be a group that can promptly assimilate the research information and formulate an action plan to address the identified dysfunctions.

The core charge for the Initiatives Committee is to develop a two to three year plan that will:

- ✓ Identify the various areas of the community as positive places to rent or buy
- ✓ Create a series of options for block groups and individuals to improve one or more parts of the community through activities such as those described in the Canton Neighborhoods Workbook
- ✓ Develop a marketing and promotion program to brand the neighborhoods as communities of choice
- ✓ Work with real estate professionals to encourage the sale of houses to homebuyers and highly qualified investors
- ✓ Facilitate the use of special lending and other tools to promote home improvement and purchases
- ✓ Support the policy work of the Investment Committee by engaging residents in the political process of seeking programs and funds

While the exact timeframes for the work of these two committees depends on a number of factors, it is important to plan for the initial work of the Investment Committee as being completed within four to six months. Further, the Initiatives group should complete the first and second round of activities within two years.

At that point, there should be an evaluation of the status of the various parts of the neighborhood, the impact of work to date, and the potential for continued or additional work. The second phase evaluation must not be omitted. Intervening in an emerging disinvestment process is not easy; it takes good judgment and a large amount of luck to hit the right targets especially while the national economy is so fluid. Nevertheless, every dollar spent now will surely avoid many dollars required later and all efforts to sustain and increase housing equity serves not only the current owners, but also the tax base of the city.

The fundamental question is whether the resident, civic, and political leaders will seize the opportunity of acting now through a focused workplan that positions this part of Canton for long-term stability. It will be very easy to not act until the problems are defining the discussion; effective leaders recognize this and will take the risk of action now as the better alternative.

CHALLENGES FOR THE CITY OF CANTON

- ✓ Assist the Committees to obtain accurate ownership and occupancy information and other tracking data
- ✓ Commit to a joint effort with residents, such as an exterior code compliance initiative
- ✓ Work with nonprofits, lenders, and foundations to develop special lending packages to kick-start the homebuyer market and stimulate home improvements
- ✓ Assist in all self-help projects, branding and promotional efforts, and prioritized neighborhood infrastructure repairs
- ✓ Maintain a consistent pattern of discussing all planned neighborhood improvements with residents and investors

CHALLENGES FOR THE RESIDENTS OF FAIRGROUNDS AND CLARENDON

- ✓ Assist in developing a useful neighborhood survey that looks at the various smaller neighborhoods with particular challenges, such as traffic flows, high-density blocks, commercial intrusion, etc.
- ✓ Develop neighborhood identity themes and messages for the smaller neighborhoods and for the larger community
- ✓ Initiate a resident sponsored neighborhood planning process
- ✓ Involve neighbors in all events, activities, and celebrations
- ✓ Partner with landlords as fellow stakeholders
- ✓ Partner with city government on effective exterior code compliance efforts, bulk trash events, or other community improvement initiatives
- ✓ Sponsor numerous identity and image projects to build resident involvement and neighborhood branding, internally and externally
- ✓ Promote the neighborhood to homebuyers through events, joint projects with real estate professionals, and open houses

CHALLENGES FOR FOUNDATIONS, CORPORATIONS, AND OTHERS

- ✓ Support resident-driven efforts to create a positive image and message
- ✓ Fund the data collection, small projects, landscaping improvements, signage installations, etc. that are necessary to build cohesion and identity
- ✓ Provide the necessary support staff needed for an early intervention in neighborhood change

NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Description	Number
Single family houses	1,059
Duplexes	135
Multi-family	17
Apartments (4-19 units)	12
# of buildings	47
Commercial Vacant land	2
Vacant Residential Land Parcels	2
Average year built*	1922
Average size*	1,322 square feet
Properties lived in by homeowner*	757 (72.0% of known)
Investment Properties*	294 (28.0% of known)
Unknown	8

*Single-family homes only

REAL ESTATE INFORMATION

Recent Sales

Address	Listing Price	Sale Price	Listing Date	Sale Date	Type	Year Built	Square Footage
1230 Broad Ave	\$21,900	\$15,500	7/6/09	11/10/09	Single family	1931	1,328
195 Wertz Ave NW	\$19,900	\$17,500	10/6/09	2/16/10	Single family	1915	1,520
204 Broad Ave NW	\$21,780	\$20,782	10/29/09	12/31/09	Single family	1920	1,456
1122 Broad Ave NW (vacant)	\$44,900	\$22,000	9/14/09	4/8/10	Single family	1935	1,600
1136 Broad Ave NW (short sale)	\$43,000	\$25,000	7/10/09	1/11/10	Single family	1915	2,300
1113 Roslyn Ave NW	\$45,000	\$41,000	10/30/09	3/30/10	Single family	1920	1,332
500 Broad Ave NW	\$59,750	\$55,000	7/12/09	12/14/09	Single family	1919	1,569
137 Claremont Ave NW	\$69,900	\$64,000	7/25/08	1/13/10	Single family	1927	1,533
1123 Broad Ave NW	\$79,900	\$79,000	3/12/09	12/14/09	Single family	1914	2,045
829 Bedford Ave NW	\$19,900	\$10,920	8/21/09	10/6/09	Single family	1927	1,180
334 Clarendon Ave NW (vacant)	\$9,500	\$11,000	10/16/09	11/19/09	Single family	1910	1,358

Address	Listing Price	Sale Price	Listing Date	Sale Date	Type	Year Built	Square Footage
526 Bedford Ave NW	\$19,900	\$15,500	9/29/09	11/30/09	Single family	1925	1,360
333 Bedford Ave NW	\$22,900	\$18,000	12/23/09	2/16/10	Single family	1919	1,476
900 Clarendon Ave NW	\$25,000	\$22,000	2/10/10	5/10/10	Single family	1931	2,101
826 Smith Ave NW (vacant)	\$30,000	\$25,000	9/18/09	11/20/09	Single family	1926	1,224
1106 Clarendon Ave NW	\$25,900	\$25,050	9/16/09	12/10/09	Single family	1930	1,617
520 Arlington Ave NW	\$26,000	\$26,000	9/18/09	11/20/09	Single family	1922	1,268
510 Arlington Ave NW	\$27,500	\$26,000	2/9/10	4/12/10	Single family	1915	1,320
1002 Clarendon Ave NW	\$26,900	\$26,900	11/6/09	11/30/09	Single family	1937	1,582
1002 Clarendon Ave NW	\$74,900	\$73,500	2/1/10	3/12/10	Single family	1937	1,582
505 Arlington Ave NW	\$18,000	\$16,750	3/18/10	5/6/10	Duplex	1924	1,782
2314 10 th St NW (auction)	\$35,500	\$20,500	9/15/09	2/17/10	Single family	1925	1,212
2825 11 th St NW	\$30,000	\$24,500	8/11/09	4/19/10	Single family	1923	1,248
3222 2 nd St NW (bank owned)	\$22,000	\$13,000	5/14/09	10/30/09	Single family	1922	1454
2814 4 th St NW (vacant)	\$16,000	\$13,000	11/19/09	1/28/10	Single family	1907	1161
2409 6 th St NW (bank owned)	\$22,600	\$16,000	1/4/10	3/19/10	Single family	1918	1478
2817 7 th St NW	\$16,000	\$16,500	1/11/10	3/2/10	Single family	1916	1384
2425 7 th St NW (vacant)	\$69,900	\$50,000	11/13/09	12/21/09	Single family	1922	1320
2902 5 th St NW	\$59,900	\$57,000	4/1/09	11/19/09	Single family	1919	1680
2231 4 th St NW	\$59,900	\$60,000	9/9/09	4/30/10	Single family	1892	1284
3230 3 rd St NW	\$67,500	\$67,500	10/6/09	11/13/09	Single family	1922	1305

Currently on Market

Address	Listing Price	Listing Date	Type	Year Built	Square Footage
710 Wertz Ave NW (HUD vacant)	\$20,000	3/12/10	Single family	1902	1,366
203 Claremont Ave NW	\$49,000	3/3/10	Single family	1940	1,156
229 Roslyn Ave NW	\$50,000	5/20/10	Single family	1923	1,088
919 Broad Ave NW	\$59,500	2/25/10 (org. listed 8/20/09 for \$61,500)	Single family	1917	1,506
1109 Brant Ave NW (tenant)	\$59,900	3/24/10	Single family	1950	1,014
138 Broad Ave NW	\$59,900	5/12/10	Single family	1914	1,664
716 Broad Ave NW	\$59,900	5/14/10	Single family	1927	1,524
1017 Broad Ave NW	\$59,900	1/11/10	Single family	1902	1,432
349 Roslyn Ave NW	\$94,900	4/28/20	Single family	1951	1,282
123 Fawcett Ct. NW (tenant)	\$95,000	5/15/09	Single family	1915	936
1021 Roslyn Ave NW (owner-occupied)	\$119,900	3/18/10	Single family	1950	1,856
722 Broad Ave NW	\$15,000	1/28/09	Residential land		6566 sq feet
337 Arlington Ave NW (bank owned)	\$17,900	5/17/10	Single family	1917	1,404
344 Arlington Ave NW (vacant)	\$37,723	9/11/09	Single family	1920	1,480
309 Arlington Ave NW (tenant)	\$44,900	8/31/09	Single family	1914	1,416
501 Smith Ave NW	\$47,900	4/7/10	Single family	1908	1,320
336 Clarendon Ave NW (vacant)	\$49,900	6/4/09	Single family	1928	1,412
315 Arlington Ave NW	\$59,900	9/29/09	Single family	1916	1,467
815 Columbus Ave NW	\$59,900	12/29/09	Single family	1925	1,194
501 Bedford Ave NW (owner occupied)	\$64,500	4/8/10	Single family	1924	1,248
526 Bedford Ave NW (vacant)	\$64,900	3/25/10	Single family	1925	1,360
1101 Clarendon Ave NW (vacant)	\$69,900	10/21/09	Single family	1913	1,292
350-352 Smith Ave NW	\$62,000	1/26/10	Duplex	1924	2,080

Address	Listing Price	Listing Date	Type	Year Built	Square Footage
2821 11 th St NW	\$17,500	2/26/10	Single family	1923	1,346
2902 13 th St NW (bank owned)	\$30,000	11/25/09	Single family	1928	1,126
3106 12 th St NW (vacant HUD)	\$30,000	5/21/10	Single family	1925	1,552
2831 13 th St NW (vacant)	\$58,900	3/18/10	Single family	1946	1,288
2814 9 th St NW (tenant)	\$59,000	3/15/10	Single family	1923	1,774
2515 9 th St NW (vacant)	\$59,900	1/29/10	Single family	1941	1,128
2436 11 th St NW	\$60,000	1/18/10	Single family	1901	1,669
3212 10 th St NW (owner occupied)	\$78,500	12/15/09	Single family	1941	1000
3213 9 th St NW (owner occupied)	\$79,000	1/11/10	Single family	1941	1062
2407 10 th St NW (owner occupied)	\$84,900	3/28/10	Single family	1925	1302
2437 9 th St NW (tenant)	\$84,900	3/5/10	Single family	1921	1296
2908 9 th St NW (owner occupied)	\$89,900	9/7/09	Single family	1925	1260
2302 11 th St NW (bank owned)	\$37,900	3/19/10	Duplex	1926	1547
2521 4 th St NW (bank owned)	\$16,900	5/17/10	Single family	1918	1850
2624 Crown Pl NW (vacant, HUD)	\$20,000	5/21/10	Single family	1916	1248
2814 5 th St NW (vacant)	\$29,900	4/15/10	Single family	1919	1600
2831 7 th St NW (owner occupied, short sale)	\$39,900	4/5/10	Single family	1910	1456
2305 7 th St NW	\$45,900	4/15/10	Single family	1930	1474
2313 7 th St NW (vacant)	\$47,000	3/30/10 (org. listed 9/9/09 for \$48,500)	Single family	1925	1206
3214 2 nd St NW (vacant)	\$59,500	12/18/09	Single family	1924	1008
2616 5 th St NW (vacant)	\$59,900	3/13/10	Single family	1942	1288
3215 2 nd St NW	\$74,900	2/2/10	Single family	1925	1296
2903 Vera Pl NW (owner occupied)	\$37,000	5/24/10	Single family	1926	1174
3219 Glenn Pl NW (rental)	\$39,900	5/3/10	Single family	1941	864

Address	Listing Price	Listing Date	Type	Year Built	Square Footage
2237 Tuscarawas St W	\$184,900	8/16/09	Four-family	1923	6480
2306 Tuscarawas St W (vacant)	\$194,900	12/18/09 (org. listed 5/8/09 for \$249,900)	Office	1953	3800

Pending Sale

Address	Listing Price	Listing Date	Type	Year Built	Square Footage
810 Broad Ave NW (vacant)	\$66,100	12/10/09	Single family	1919	1,200
823 Halter Ct NW (vacant HUD)	\$21,600	2/5/10	Single family	1921	1,338
1100 Clarendon Ave NW	\$79,876	3/8/10	Single family	1946	1,474
525 Smith Ave NW	\$89,900	4/16/10	Four-family	1930	5,824
2220 9 th St NW (bank owned)	\$17,510	4/28/10	Single family	1925	1,376
3048 12 th St NW (bank owned, vacant)	\$19,900	5/20/10	Single family	1916	1,176
3108 13 th St NW (vacant)	\$25,000	4/15/10	Single family	1923	1,040
2822 13 th St NW (bank owned)	\$39,900	12/18/09	Single family	1936	952
2432 10 th St NW	\$79,500	4/18/10	Single family	1923	1444

Recently Expired

Address	Listing Price	Listing Date	Expire Date	Type	Year Built	Square Footage
335 Broad Ave NW (owner occupied)	\$29,000	5/19/09	5/20/10	Single family	1911	1,456
915 Broad Ave	\$89,900	1/4/10	4/20/10	Three	1918	2,224
804 Columbus Ave NW (short sale)	\$15,000	11/25/09	5/24/10	Single family	1926	1,243
340 Columbus Ave NW	\$44,900	5/21/09	11/30/09	Single family	1968	990
801 Arlington Ave NW	\$48,000	11/6/09	5/6/10	Single family	1904	1,696
822 Halter Ct NW	\$49,000	9/14/09	4/18/10	Single family	1925	1,016
348 Arlington Ave NW	\$54,900	12/7/09 (org. listed 5/6/09 for \$68,000)	5/10/10	Single family	1922	1,399
900 Clarendon Ave NW	\$59,900	11/16/09	2/3/10	Single family	1931	2,101
1114-1116 Clarendon Ave NW	\$59,900	10/9/09	1/9/10	Duplex	1927	2,494
126 Clarendon	\$65,000	12/16/09	5/16/10	Duplex	1905	2,016
2410 9th St NW	\$34,900	11/2/09	5/2/10	Single family	1910	1,260
2916 10th St NW (tenant)	\$37,500	4/11/09	3/24/10	Single family	1918	1,424
2909 10th St NW (owner occupied)	\$49,000	6/9/09	12/31/09	Single family	1919	1,352
2501 11th St NW (short sale)	\$58,900	10/5/09	1/5/10	Single family	1923	1,542
2827 12th St NW (vacant)	\$61,000	5/22/09	12/11/09	Single family	1941	1374
3212 10th St NW	\$79,900	6/25/09	10/31/09	Single family	1941	1042
2930 13th St NW (vacant)	\$89,900	9/4/09	3/4/10	Single family	1926	1248
3019 12th St NW (owner occupied rental)	\$71,000	11/11/09	5/11/10	Duplex	1924	1780

Address	Listing Price	Listing Date	Expire Date	Type	Year Built	Square Footage
3215 2 nd St NW (vacant)	\$12,900	7/20/09	10/20/09	Single family	1925	1296
2517 4 th St NW (short sale)	\$24,800	9/23/09	12/23/09	Single family	1912	1344
2412 6 th St NW (tenant)	\$38,900	1/13/10	5/14/10	Single family	1909	912
2902 6 th St NW (tenant)	\$59,900	8/13/09	11/13/09	Single family	1921	1386
2909 7 th St NW	\$59,900	9/24/09	3/24/10	Single family	1880	1234

Withdrawn

Address	Listing Price	Listing Date	Withdrawal Date	Type	Year Built	Square Footage
1150 Broad Ave NW (vacant)	\$69,900	9/2/09	11/18/09	Single family	1910	1,410
508 Columbus Ave NW	\$57,900	11/18/09	4/2/10	Single family	1924	1,548
701 Columbus Ave NW	\$69,900	1/24/10	3/30/10	Single family	1920	1,152
140 Smith Ave NW	\$89,900	2/12/10	2/15/10	Single family	1920	1,564
2910 13 th St NW	\$29,900	5/13/09	11/4/09	Single family	1920	1,126
2611 12 th St NW (vacant)	\$32,500	3/3/10 (originally listed 10/12/09 for \$49,900)	5/17/10	Single family	1919	1,200
2515 9 th St NW (vacant)	\$64,700	11/4/09	1/27/10	Single family	1941	1128
2900 8 th St NW	\$74,900	9/21/09	1/11/10	Single family	1915	1442
2814 13 th St NW (owner occupied)	\$84,900	9/18/09	5/10/10	Single family	1961	1170
2409 6 th St NW (bank owned)	\$22,600	12/9/09 (originally listed 8/21/09)	1/4/10	Single family	1918	1478
2821 2 nd St NW	\$59,900	2/28/10	5/14/10	Single family	1916	1504

OLD SOUTHWEST CANTON

NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARIES

North	East	South	West
Tuscarawas Street West	McKinley Avenue SW (West side only)	9 th Street SW	Railroad tracks

WORKPLAN

Mostly built before the explosive growth of the city after 1910, one of the earliest neighborhoods in Canton was established southwest of downtown. It spread from the busy commercial life along West Tuscarawas to 9th Street SW and from the elegant homes along McKinley Avenue SW to the railroad tracks on the west. The neighborhood consisted mostly of modest working income houses with some on main streets, but many were on smaller streets that crisscrossed the area. Noise and smoke from the trains and factories limited the attractiveness of the Old Southwest neighborhood, but the proximity to the commercial center and to employment at businesses served by the railroad made this neighborhood a good choice for working families.

Through the years, the location actually improved because of the construction of schools in or near the neighborhood and certainly because of the change from coal to diesel for the trains. Further, because it had been “built-out” as a modest income neighborhood before World War I, it never had the large houses that became common in much of Canton during and just after that war. Therefore, the neighborhood wasn’t made substantially denser with house conversions to apartments, as happened in other communities near downtown.

Instead, Old Southwest Canton was quickly eclipsed as desirable residential sites as better transportation made it easy to live in newer, well constructed houses elsewhere in Canton and even in the suburbs. As a result, population loss continued over many years. Part of this decline reflects the removal of properties to accommodate streets and public facilities, but much of the downsizing reflects the steady demolition of unused properties. Today, mostly half of the neighborhood consists of vacant lots or vacant houses. In fact, only just over 110 single-family houses and 18 duplexes are still standing although some of the remaining structures are empty and will likely soon be demolished. In fact, a recent windshield survey identified 37 houses that need to be removed.



The housing stock is profoundly undervalued due to the amount of long-term disinvestment. The only sale in the last six months was for \$5650 for a single-family house. An empty lot is listed for more. The fact that a lot is considered more valuable suggests that the real estate market has determined that the built neighborhood has reached its life span and much of the current housing stock has no value. In terms of the

commercial properties along the edges, prices are much higher, but even those prices are depressed due to the failing real estate market for housing.



These observations are especially regrettable since the neighborhood has many properties that show how much people value the place. Even though the houses might have obvious problems, residents continue to maintain their homes and yards in a prideful manner. Small houses are often well painted and surrounded by manicured lawns and vegetable gardens. As a result of this care, there is a positive overall feel of the neighborhood that is non-threatening and somewhat rural. There are few well-kept houses and many more at or below a basic level of upkeep. Regardless of the mix, the neighborhood continues to be primarily defined by the shabbiest houses and abandoned properties.

It is this mixed prognosis that presents the central challenge to city officials and other civic leaders. Old Southwest is a stable neighborhood of modest houses serving lower income households. Over time it will likely become emptier as more houses are vacated and as more abandoned properties are removed. This is not unlike many other areas that were built in the same era. But for city leaders, the differences for Old Southwest are two-fold: first, the neighborhood is often seen by visitors, especially those using the new Federal Center, and second, the neighborhood has at least two major development sites that have long term value to the city.

The opening of the Federal Building has already highlighted the first issue. Third Street SW is an easy bypass for drivers wishing to avoid Tuscarawas Street West. Third Street SW goes right through the neighborhood and passes many vacant and substandard houses. Once at the Federal Center, many of the nearby houses reflect the conditions of the neighborhood and don't give a positive picture of where Canton is heading. Even some of the better houses, such as three historic properties currently in a long process of preservation, aren't reassuring about the future of the area. This is especially frustrating because the essential livability of the neighborhood isn't communicated. Surely, the large amount of vacant land is a problem, but the abandoned houses and a few truly substandard properties are the bigger issue. Taken together, the public face of Old Southwest isn't reflecting well on itself or on Canton.



Even if we accept these observations, the larger question asks what is going to happen in the future. Old Southwest has extensive open land and it has at least two publicly owned properties that offer incredible opportunities. The largest in terms of land area is the Wells School site. This vacant school takes up a very

large city block on the well-trafficked McKinley Avenue SW. Both the structure and the land offer great redevelopment opportunities. Adjacent to that site is an attractive public park that fills a square block. Just west of that park is an older public housing tower, owned by the Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority, one of the nation's best and most innovative housing authorities. Taken together, these sites offer the equivalent of four city blocks of public land, parts of which will be maintained as is or developed for other uses or demolished and left open.

Most cities with large sites and vacant structures such as these face numerous proposed uses. Some suggested uses focus on service to special needs populations – the homeless, women's shelters, or housing for recovering substance abusers. Other proposals target the arts, education, and cultural activities. In the case of Canton, these types of uses are likely inappropriate or unnecessary, since there are so many other sites where these activities can be more successfully provided and where the activities can reinforce nearby investment. Moreover, many of the typical uses require large capital outlays and ongoing upkeep and maintenance costs, all of which are unlikely to be raised in Canton at this time. Further, few uses of this type would trigger reinvestment in the Old Southwest Neighborhood.



Obviously, these types of opportunity sites present a complex set of challenges to city leaders. When decisions are made about the reuse of the school building, the development of the public park, or working with the Housing Authority for the modernization or replacement of the tower, these decisions need to be made in the context of plans for the larger neighborhood. Let's look at just one example of how this reality could impact local decision-making.



Many sites like these in Old Southwest are being refashioned as mixed-use housing under the Federal HOPE VI program. This program offers substantial grants to create new housing that assures quality, affordable units along with new market rate housing. The projects can be done using current structures or can involve all new construction. There are a number of criteria used in approving Federal HOPE VI grants, but one preference is for those workable plans that upgrade the adjoining blocks. In fact, one outcome of HOPE VI investments is that the newly developed housing be located on the adjacent blocks, so that the overall neighborhood improves in terms of quality housing and income mix.



In the case of Old Southwest, there could be a large amount of land available to support such efforts if current demolition supports a well-considered plan. Future development needs should help determine where demolition should occur first and how the ownership status of the lots ought to be handled. Also since there will be market-rate units in any proposed HOPE VI project, there will be even greater pressure to address the substandard and abandoned houses in Old Southwest. That means that any application for such Federal funding needs to address the nearby demolition and renovation issues as part of the application.

All of this discussion is not to say that such a project should take place, but there is little doubt that various proposals will arise over the next few years for a structure as large as Wells School. Moreover, the Housing Authority will need to make decisions about replacement or renovation of its property. Many of the same comments that apply to the Wells School site could likewise apply to the Housing Authority's investment plans.

Because of these possible activities and the increased neighborhood traffic bringing more attention to the neighborhood, it is in the city's best interest to be proactive on this matter and not be in a reactive mode. It is recommended that over the next three years a workplan be put in place to make sure that, as opportunities arise, the city can negotiate the most successful outcomes for the community. **To initiate this process, the city should undertake three steps.**

1. First, the city should catalogue all properties in the neighborhood with accurate information about ownership, property use, building conditions, and related data.
2. Second, the information should be analyzed and mapped to determine where to concentrate investment in demolition, acquisition, code enforcement, and conveyance of vacant parcels.
3. Third, the city should work with local nonprofits and the funding community to investigate strategies for maintaining a portion of this neighborhood as a viable community of modest income owners and renters.

While this process needs to include all the stakeholders eventually, the process should begin “in-house” with city staff and representatives of Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority. These are the two principal players that can influence outcomes in Old Southwest over the next few years. **Essentially, there are three likely options.**

1. The first option would be to allow the neighborhood to continue to become more vacant. Under these conditions, the focus will be on removing properties as soon as resources are available, enforcing code compliance requirements on existing rental houses, facilitating periodic clean-up projects, and fully communicating with the remaining renters, homeowners, and landlords. This option assumes no significant new development over the next number of years.
2. The second option would generally follow the format of the first; however, there would be a more conscious effort to engage and train the residents as long-term stakeholders. This sort of resident involvement effort would make sense if the Neighborhoods of Promise grant were approved. That grant necessitates that households be engaged in the community renewal process.
3. The third option assumes development activities will take place in the next two to three years. It focuses on the necessary data and the creation of a strategic plan that answers questions around long-term income mix, priorities for demolition, procedures for acquiring land, policies for vacant land in sections of Old Southwest that won't be redeveloped soon, and related issues for a community that will undergo significant transformation.

Since it is not known which of these approaches is more likely to happen, a conventional workplan cannot be created at this time. However, the initial procedures are similar in all three cases and there are underlying principles that should be followed. Therefore, the following outlines the probable challenges to each group of stakeholders.

CHALLENGES FOR THE CITY OF CANTON

- ✓ Acquire and catalogue accurate ownership and occupancy information
- ✓ Select target sites for demolition and lot acquisition to support a long-range development plan for the neighborhood
- ✓ Participate in a vacant lot strategic planning process for this and other target areas
- ✓ Commit to a modest but consistent annual number of demolitions so that residents and visitors see a regular pattern of clearance
- ✓ Work with nonprofits, investors, and neighbors about improvement options such as an exterior code compliance effort
- ✓ Provide for periodic bulk trash removal
- ✓ Explain all planned neighborhood improvements to residents and investors

CHALLENGES FOR THE CIVIC LEADERSHIP OF CANTON

- ✓ Assist in developing a useful neighborhood survey that goes beyond structures by documenting the everyday concerns of the residents
- ✓ Support innovative uses of the vacant sites in ways that communicate positive change to the larger Canton community
- ✓ Partner with the city, investors, residents, and volunteers to create an effective exterior code compliance effort and health and safety repairs to the houses
- ✓ Encourage experiments in community problem solving, through joint activities like bulk trash events
- ✓ Promote communications systems that work in a modest income, small neighborhood that lacks a central gathering point or school

CHALLENGES FOR THE RESIDENTS OF OLD SOUTHWEST

- ✓ Participate fully in the planning process
- ✓ Involve neighbors in the joint events
- ✓ Partner with landlords as fellow stakeholders

JOINT CHALLENGES FOR ALL

- ✓ Create a positive message about Old Southwest
- ✓ Install the plantings and signage with the name and the themes
- ✓ Recognize that change will come and that this interim work is a step in a process

NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Description	Number
Single family houses	111
Duplexes	18
Multi-family	6
# of nonresidential buildings	26
Vacant Residential Land Parcels	88
Vacant Commercial Land Parcels	29
Average year built*	1912
Average size*	1,256
Properties lived in by homeowner*	56 (half of known)
Investment Properties*	55 (half of known)
Unknown owner/rental*	4
# abandoned	37 (25.7% of residences)
# below standard	94 (65.3% of residences)
# above standard	8 (5.6% of residences)

*Single family homes only

REAL ESTATE INFORMATION

Recent Sales

Address	Listing Price	Sale Price	Listing Date	Sale Date	Type	Year Built	Square Footage
1100 5 th St SW	\$8,500	\$5,650	10/9/09	11/19/09	Single family	1889	1,397

Currently on Market

Address	Listing Price	Listing Date	Type	Year Built	Square Footage/ Lot size
1009 3 rd St SW (land)	\$25,000	1/28/09	Residential land		3500 sq ft
1011 3 rd St SW (land)	\$10,000	1/28/09	Residential land		5000 sq ft
606 9 th St SW	\$125,000	5/17/10	Commercial	1900	1824

Recently Expired

Address	Listing Price	Listing Date	Expire Date	Type	Year Built	Square Footage
711 High Ave SW	\$18,900	10/28/09	12/15/09	Single family	1880	1050

LOGAN WOOD

NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARIES

North	East	South	West
Back of 15 th St NW	Logan Ave NW	Back of 12 th St NW	Woodland Ave NW (both sides)

WORKPLAN

With some obvious exceptions such as urban renewal areas and historic districts, neighborhoods follow fairly consistent patterns as the distance from the city center extends. Those places closest to the center are usually much older, the housing has undergone extensive alterations, traffic impacts are greater, and there are more commercial activities mixed into the blocks. As additional neighborhoods developed over the years, more attention was paid to uniformity of land use, provision of adequate roads, and careful adherence to building codes and standards.



Canton has many neighborhoods that were essentially constructed as residential extensions. Some areas, to name a few, were the downtown area and many more that were built as distinct residential communities, primarily consisting of single-family houses. One real difficulty is dealing with the interface of those two types of housing areas, because there are often a number of blocks or small neighborhoods that contain elements of each kind of style of development.

In the case of Canton, residents of some of the most desirable neighborhoods aren't necessarily looking at what is happening in areas immediately adjacent to downtown; instead they are paying attention to what is happening on the blocks adjacent to their neighborhoods. Those blocks tend to typify the mixed style of urban development.

An example of this dynamic is playing out adjacent to the "Green Wedge", which is the area stretching between 15th Street NW and 25th Street NW and from Market Avenue North to Cleveland Avenue NW. This is one of the residential jewels of the city with beautifully maintained, large homes on tree-shaded wide streets. While this wedge has 15th Street NW as its southern edge, there are additional residential blocks south of 15th Street NW down to 12th Street NW. Today these blocks are potentially foreshadowing what could happen further to the north. The story being told by those blocks has both positive and negative messages. On one hand, there are many beautiful homes and solid blocks, but there are also a number of properties in various states of disrepair and blocks that are beginning to fray.

What the property owners to the north are seeing is increasing instances of poor quality rental, long periods of rental vacancies, many for sale signs, and vacancy that often seems to lead to abandonment. These observations might not be as distressing in other areas of Canton, but this transitional zone is the bellwether for nearly one hundred blocks to the north. If quality properties south of 15th Street NW are dramatically losing value, what does this foretell for the houses in the next set of blocks?



Therefore, this workplan proposes looking at the fulcrum of the Green Wedge, which in this case are the blocks above 12th Street NW to 15th Street NW and from Logan Avenue NW (just west of Market) to Woodland Avenue NW (east of Cleveland Avenue). Using the two boundary avenues as designators, the project site for the workplan is called Logan Wood.

Of course, there are other at-risk communities that serve as entries to stable communities. In fact, this specific area was chosen from a number of possible sites. Instead of thinking of Logan Wood as a special case, it is important that the city officials, nonprofits leaders, funders, and citizens recognize that this area is symbolic of all those declining communities that are the front doors to stable neighborhoods. Canton cannot afford to under-invest in the entry neighborhoods that either will support continued investment or will convince property owners that delaying investment is the best long-term strategy.



Let's start by trying to learn more about Logan Wood. For these purposes, we are omitting the busy through-streets of 12th Street NW and 15th Street NW; rather we are paying attention to the more residential elements of the area. In particular, there are nearly 150 residential structures. The majority – 94 in total – are single-family houses (34 are duplexes) and are mostly large houses converted to include a rental. There are also 19 multi-family buildings. Some of these are conversions and some were built as apartment structures during the era when apartment buildings were interspersed with larger homes on main streets and smaller houses on the various Courts, Places, and Lanes. Due to the mix

of structures, the average property size is just over 1500 square feet, although many houses exceed that figure. In fact, 11 exceed 2000 square feet, but 9 are less than 1000 square feet.

Like much of Canton, this area was developed just before and after World War I, so the average year of the properties built is 1914. Many houses are, therefore, nearly 100 years old and that means expensive repairs and modernization is necessary. Even everyday maintenance is difficult and costly. Fortunately, the data suggests that about half of the single-family houses are still owner-occupied. This is one reason why so many of the blocks still have outstanding houses that show laudable care and upkeep.



On the other hand, real estate values aren't strong. In the last six months only three of the single-family houses have sold and the prices ranged from \$7500 to \$15,500. The sales closed within two months of listing. These low prices and relatively quick sales suggest that these were likely investor purchases. This is reinforced by the two additional sales that occurred in the same time period; one was for a duplex and the other was for a three-family house. Indeed, there is only one pending sale and it is for a \$22,000 property, which again suggests an investor purchase because small mortgages for homebuyers are almost non-existent at this time.

There are three, conventional single-family houses for sale in the neighborhood. In addition, there are two duplexes, one three-family home, and one five-unit apartment. Listing prices for the single-family homes range from \$39,900 to \$69,000. These properties have been on the market for an average of 99 days. There are two properties in the neighborhood whose listing has recently expired without selling (one was a four-family unit). These properties were on the market for an average of 76 days before expiring. Finally, there is one property that was withdrawn from the market. It was listed for \$25,000. All of this paints a picture of a neighborhood in flux; the conditions are even more disturbing when noted that almost all sales are taking place on Woodland Avenue and Yale Avenue.



Because of this concentration of property transfers, a special study was done of Woodland Avenue. The map shows some of the current conditions. Today more than five-dozen properties line Woodland Avenue NW, most have some special feature, such as the large size or the quality of the architecture. This was once one of the finest streets in the city and many of the properties reflect that period and still have excellent repair and beautiful yards. Regrettably, many other properties are not adequately maintained and some are currently abandoned or have stood vacant for a very long time. Since this is one of the front doors to Logan Wood and since it is also

a key gateway to the blocks to the north, the workplan has a distinct phase for this area.

In addition however, the core of the neighborhood is also undergoing rapid transition. As noted, in the last few months, three houses on Yale have sold, one is currently on the market, and one listing on Yale has expired. This is a high level of turnover for a primary segment of the community. Further, there continues to be a number of vacant houses and abandoned properties that undermine the real estate market in the neighborhood. Since there remains a strong core of homeowners, it is critical that this neighborhood be assisted in re-positioning itself as a place of choice.

To accomplish this work, it is recommended that two parallel tracks be followed. First, for Woodland Avenue NE there should be a concentrated revitalization effort. Because of the size and historic nature of the properties, special resources will be needed along with a high level of cooperation. There is no way that every house can be saved, but those of special merit should be. Other houses need to be demolished with the lots transferred to responsible adjacent owners. The city needs to take the lead, but local funders, historic property lenders from Cleveland, and responsible quality investors need to join the involved neighbors to create an aggressive, three-year plan to transform this street into an urban showcase for Canton. The mix of single-family and multi-family units should be viable; the rehab cost will be high, but special lending would help mitigate this disadvantage. Public improvements on the street and sidewalks and special promotional grants from foundations can make this under-utilized resource shine again. The particulars about lot treatments, celebrations, and outreach can all be found in the Canton Neighborhoods Workbook, but it will be the task force that will create the unique set of interventions that will make this succeed.

Second, while the Woodland Showcase project is proceeding, every effort should be made to complete a conventional neighborhood outreach effort in the central core of the community. This means organizing door-to-door, block-based curb appeal projects, resident involvement in home sales, outreach to landlords, an identity campaign, a program to address vacant houses and abandoned properties, as well as a vacant lot initiative and exterior code compliance measures. (The reader is again reminded to use the Canton Neighborhoods Workbook to think through the various activities.) This sort of work would normally require three years in a community of this size, but in this case there is the simultaneous Woodland Showcase project. This means that there will need to be a conscious delay in the core neighborhood or a commitment on part of all the partners – city government, funders, nonprofits, etc. – to treat this as two areas, each deserving full attention.

Because this two-part dynamic will have to be negotiated, it isn't possible to create a two or three year workplan. Instead, the residents and stakeholders are asked to fully review the data, walk the neighborhood, discuss the impact on communities to the north, and reach a decision about what can be done and in what timeframe. The lists below assume that both activities will be completed.

CHALLENGES FOR THE CITY OF CANTON

- ✓ Update and assess the ownership and occupancy information
- ✓ Identify structures for demolition and commit to an annual target number
- ✓ Facilitate a vacant lot strategic planning process for both parts of Logan Wood
- ✓ Partner with the Woodland Showcase task force and with the residents of Logan Wood and involved investors
- ✓ Work with neighbors about improvement options such as curb appeal projects, exterior code compliance efforts, street and sidewalk repair priorities, etc.
- ✓ Participate in an open process of planning of neighborhood improvements and of the Woodland Showcase project

CHALLENGES FOR THE CIVIC LEADERSHIP OF CANTON

- ✓ Support the Woodland Showcase project, especially in those areas of promotion, organizing, and celebration that aren't usually fundable through city coffers
- ✓ Encourage the use of community-based outreach specialists to develop proactive strategies for community building, especially in the core neighborhood
- ✓ Support and encourage resident-driven efforts in community projects and problem solving through activities like curb appeal contests, awards programs, community picnics, bulk trash events, etc.

CHALLENGES FOR THE RESIDENTS OF LOGAN WOOD

- ✓ Participate fully in the two renewal efforts and the planning process
- ✓ Reach out to other neighbors, especially for the events and celebrations
- ✓ Partner with investors as fellow stakeholders

JOINT CHALLENGES FOR ALL

- ✓ Promote a positive image for Logan Wood
- ✓ Install and maintain the plantings and signage that highlight the name and the themes

NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Description	Number
Single family houses	104
Duplexes	34
Multi-family	19
# of buildings	9
Vacant Residential Land Parcels	17
Average year built	1914
Average size	1528 square feet
Properties lived in by homeowner*	58 (56% of known)
Investment Properties*	45 (44% of known)
Unknown owner/rental*	1
# abandoned or vacant	35
# below standard (abandoned/vacant included)	66
Average/Standard	20
# above standard	18
# houses 2,000 square feet or over	11
# houses under 1,000 square feet	9

*Single-family homes only

REAL ESTATE INFORMATION

Recent Sales

Address	Listing Price	Sale Price	Listing Date	Sale Date	Type	Year Built	Square Footage
1302 Woodland Ave NW (vacant)	\$17,100	\$7,500	3/16/10	5/13/10	Single family	1899	2182
306 13 th St NW	\$20,000	\$8,400	9/22/09	10/15/09	Single family	1903	1903
1401 Yale Ave NW	\$17,000	\$15,500	12/4/09	1/29/10	Single family	1918	1802
1409 Yale Ave NW	\$19,900	\$16,900	1/19/10	3/19/10	Duplex	1915	1762
1411 Yale Ave NW	\$29,900	\$23,000	12/11/09	3/8/10	3-family	1916	2468

Currently on Market

Address	Listing Price	Listing Date	Type	Year Built	Square Footage
1354 Yale Ave NW (short sale)	\$39,900	1/5/10	Single family	1926	1344
1336 Woodland Ave NW (tenant)	\$64,900	3/18/10	Single family	1912	1,536
1316 Woodland Ave NW (vacant)	\$69,000	2/19/10	Single family	1910	2,008
1307 Woodland Ave NW	\$57,400	3/18/10	Duplex	1910	2,738
1412 Woodland Ave NW	\$57,400	3/18/10	Duplex	1915	1708
1243 Woodland Ave NW	\$80,000	12/29/09	Three family	1916	3170
335 15 th St NW	\$133,500	2/12/10	5-unit apartment	1922	5995

Pending Sale

Address	Listing Price	Listing Date	Type	Year Built	Square Footage
1355 Yale Ave NW	\$22,000	3/12/10	Single family	1916	2,040

Recently Expired

Address	Listing Price	Listing Date	Expire Date	Type	Year Built	Square Footage
1351 Yale Ave NW (short sale)	\$78,000	9/1/09	12/1/09	Single family	1918	1878
410-412 15 th St NW	\$50,000	9/25/09	11/24/09	Four family	1910	3240

Withdrawn

Address	Listing Price	Listing Date	Withdrwl Date	Type	Year Built	Square Footage
304 Niles Place NW (tenant)	\$25,000	12/15/09	4/19/10	Single family	1906	740